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SENSITIVE

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

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SUBJECT: GAZA UPDATE JANUARY 11, 2009, 1300 LOCAL

REF: JERUSALEM 101

1. (SBU) Summary. Israeli military operations continued January 10-11, primarily in northern Gaza. IDF troops moved closer to the urban centers of Gaza City and Khan Yunis. Airstrikes caused a number of casualties, including civilians, mostly in northern Gaza. Gaza-based medical sources reported an estimated 854 dead and 3,400 wounded since hostilities began. A humanitarian pause is underway from 1100-1400 local. HAMAS Political Bureau Chief Khalid Mishaal delivered a speech January 10 rejecting international forces in Gaza and calling for an end to Israeli military operations, the withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza, and the opening of all crossing points. West Bank PLC members used a January 10 press conference in Ramallah to criticize the PA for limiting the right to demonstrate in support of Gazans. End summary.

Ground Operations Continue,  
Focus in Northern Gaza  
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2. (SBU) Gaza-based sources, local press, and the UN reported that the IDF continued ground operations January 10-11 in the same general areas in which it operated throughout the week, killing at least 11 militants January 10-11. The IDF moved closer to Gaza City and continued to operate around Khan Yunis.

-- NORTHERN GAZA: Gaza-based press reported that the IDF clashed with militants and continued to shell houses around Bayt Lahiya, Bayt Hanun, and Jabaliya, killing at least one militant in Bayt Lahiya and two children, and wounding several Palestinians January 10-11.

-- GAZA CITY: Gaza-based press reported heavy fighting the morning of January 11 in outlying neighborhoods of Gaza City. The IDF killed ten militants in the Shaykh Ajleen neighborhood of southwest Gaza City, which until now had not seen fighting. Fighting continued in al-Zaytun neighborhood, and shelling and helicopter attacks occurred throughout Gaza City.

-- CENTRAL GAZA: Gaza-based press reported an unspecified number of al-Balbisi family members were killed in Nusayrat refugee camps the evening of January 10.

-- SOUTHERN GAZA: Gaza-based press reported that the IDF surrounded and entered the Khuza'a village southeast of Khan Yunis and engaged militants there the morning of January 11. Artillery shelling killed one man and injured three in Rafah. Shelling in two southern Gaza villages killed one woman and set 15 houses on fire. Fifty people were treated for burns and gas inhalation, according to Gaza-based medical sources.

3. (SBU) The UN reported that the IDF maintained positions in the following areas on January 11, but no fighting was reported.

-- NORTHERN GAZA: IDF troops maintained their position in the area of the Erez crossing.

-- CENTRAL GAZA: IDF troops maintained their position east of Johr al-Dik, northeast of al-Burayj, and east of Abu al-Ajeen, near Dayr al-Balah.

-- SOUTHERN GAZA: Local press reported that IDF troops maintained their position east of the defunct Rafah airport.

#### Airstrikes Continue

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14. (SBU) Gaza-based sources, local press, and the UN reported that the IAF struck at least 60 targets January 10-11, killing an estimated 21 and wounding at least 33 others. Most of the targets were in and around Gaza City and in Rafah. The IAF dropped leaflets over Gaza City and the Beach (Shati) refugee camp, warning Palestinians to leave the area in advance of increased hostilities.

-- NORTHERN GAZA: Gaza-based press reported that IAF airstrikes January 10-11 killed two Palestinians in Jabaliya, and the UN reported that one man was killed while riding a donkey in Jabaliya. Press also reported that three people were killed and ten wounded during an airstrike on the al-Salman home in Bayt Lahiya. Two sisters from the al-Hilu family were killed in another airstrike in Bayt Lahiya.

-- GAZA CITY: Gaza-based press reported that IAF airstrikes the evening of January 10 killed four and injured nine in the Burj al-Sultan area, and two separate strikes in the Shaykh Radwan neighborhood killed a total of four and wounded nine Palestinians. Press also reported one killed and four wounded by airstrikes in the Beach (Shati) refugee camp, west of Gaza City. The UN reported that

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one Palestinian was killed in an airstrike while walking down Palestine Street in Gaza City.

-- CENTRAL GAZA: Israeli press reported that an IAF airstrike January 11 killed two militants driving on a coastal road.

-- SOUTHERN GAZA: Press reported that IAF airstrikes January 10-11 killed at least one militant and wounded one other in Rafah while targeting homes near the Egyptian border.

#### Rocket Fire Causes Injuries

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15. (SBU) Press reported at least three rockets fired into Israel from Gaza on January 11 as of 1300 local, sending two Israelis into shock. One of them was a Grad rocket. Press reported at least 22 Qassam rockets and a few Grad rockets were fired from Gaza on January 10, wounding 14 people moderately or lightly and sending 27 into shock.

#### Casualties

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16. (SBU) Gaza-based medical sources told the press that at least 854 Palestinians have been killed since hostilities began through January 11 (including 265 children, 93 women, 57 "elderly," 12 paramedics, and three journalists), and that more than 3,400 people have been injured requiring medical treatment. Press reported separately IDF statements that at least 300 militants have been killed. Gaza-based medical sources reiterated concerns that many bodies are unreachable due to hostilities.

17. (SBU) Israeli media reported several soldiers were wounded from January 10-11.

#### Humanitarian Situation

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18. (SBU) A humanitarian pause was underway January 11 from 1100-1400 local. Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz were both open January 11, and Erez was open for humanitarian cases. The Karni/al-Mintar crossing was closed on January 11. UNRWA reported opening four new

emergency shelters, for a total of 31 shelters serving 25,696 displaced persons. ICRC reported one of its vehicles was fired on by Israeli forces in Gaza January 10.

¶9. (SBU) Humanitarian supplies purchased by USAID are scheduled to move to Gaza on January 11 with the assistance of UNRWA. The Consul General and USAID and ConGen staff visited UNRWA's Jerusalem warehouse on January 10 to oversee the loading of supplies.

#### Political Developments

¶10. (SBU) HAMAS Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mishaal in a press conference January 10 described HAMAS's demands as: 1. an immediate end to Israeli military operations; 2. an immediate Israeli withdrawal from Gaza; 3. an end to the "siege" of Gaza; and 4. the opening of all crossings into Gaza, foremost Rafah. He rejected a "permanent" calm, saying that HAMAS would continue "resistance." Mishaal said HAMAS rejected international forces in Gaza and would treat them as occupiers. He hailed HAMAS fighters in Gaza and called on Abbas to initiate Palestinian reconciliation, release prisoners and allow demonstrations in the West Bank.

#### WEST BANK REACTION AND SECURITY

¶11. (SBU) PLC members in the West Bank issued two statements January 10, criticizing the PA for restricting West Bankers' right to demonstrate against Israeli operations in Gaza. One statement referenced the PASF intervention in a January 9 rally, where PASF officers reportedly assaulted and detained protesters. Hanan Ashrawi and Mustafa Barghuti led the groups issuing the statements. Peaceful protests were planned in Ramallah, Nablus, and Qalqilya for January 11.

¶12. (SBU) An unknown group distributed leaflets in Hebron calling President Abbas and the PASF collaborators. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades distributed a leaflet in Jalazone refugee camp, calling for armed struggle in the West Bank.

¶13. (SBU) Palestinians were wounded in clashes with the IDF in several areas in the West Bank, and the IDF arrested 13 Palestinians overnight. Protesters threw rocks at PASF forces in one town, and the PASF arrested three HAMAS members from a village near Hebron.

-- Two Palestinians were injured in clashes with the IDF in

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Hebron;

-- a fourteen-year-old boy was shot in the neck reportedly by live fire, in Bayt Awwa during clashes with the IDF near the separation wall; and

-- a protester was shot by the IDF in Siir village, also reportedly by live fire.

WALLES